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## Trump Trumpets His Real Plans

By Ralph Nader

December 13, 2016



Even for a failed gambling czar, Donald Trump has been surprisingly quick to show his hand as he sets the course of his forthcoming presidency. With a reactionary fervor, he is bursting backwards into the future. He has accomplished this feat through the first wave of nominations to his Cabinet and White House staff.

Only if there is a superlative to the word “nightmare” can the dictionary provide a description of his bizarre selection of men and women marinated either in corporatism or militarism, with strains of racism, class cruelty and ideological rigidity. Many of Mr. Trump’s nominees lack an appreciation of the awesome responsibilities of public office.

Let's run through Trump's "picks":

First there are the selections that will make it easier to co-opt the Republicans in Congress. He has appointed Elaine Chao, the wife of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, for Secretary of Transportation. Ms. Chao does not like regulation of big business, such as those for auto, aviation, railroad and pipeline safety. Next is Congressman Tom Price (R-GA) to lead the Department of Health and Human Services. Price wants to dump Obamacare, turn over control of Medicaid to the states – including Governors who dislike Medicaid – and even privatize (eg. corporatize) Medicare itself into the hands of the business sector already defrauding just that program by about \$60 billion a year.

Trump selected Congressman Mike Pompeo (R-KS) to be the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Pompeo is a cold war warrior who believes in a militaristic, interventionist CIA, especially toward Iran, taking that agency even further away from its original mission of gathering intelligence.

Then come the Generals. Notwithstanding the Constitutional imperative that there should be civilian control over the military, Trump has placed two generals in charge of foreign and domestic military theatres. For Secretary of Defense, Trump chose recently retired Marine General James Mattis. This "Mad Dog" believes Barack Obama to be too weak, indecisive and without a strategic plan for the Middle East. He looks very much like he is a believer in the American Empire and the U.S. being the policeman for the world.

The next general is retired Marine Gen. John Kelly, chosen to run the Department of Homeland Security. He is seen as a modern believer in the Monroe Doctrine over the Hispanic world south of Florida and the Rio Grande. He shares dangerous views on Iran and Islam with Gen. Mattis.

Inside the White House, retired General Mike Flynn is slated to take the post as national security adviser. His public statements against Islam being an ideological, existential threat to the U.S., and his proliferation of inaccurate conspiracy theories have alienated his former colleagues in the military, including reportedly the incoming Secretary of Defense.

Then there are the Trump nominees selected to run the departments whose numerous missions under existing law they want to dismantle. The proposed Secretary of Labor, Andrew Puzder, is a chain restaurateur adamantly against raising the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour and his labor views are so extreme that a progressive group of restaurant owners organized to oppose his exploitative positions and argue for a fair minimum wage. In another flagrant display of bureaucratic obstruction, Trump wants to appoint climate change denier Scott Pruitt to head the EPA, the same agency he, as Oklahoma Attorney General, fought tirelessly to undermine.

Another magnet for Trump's nominations are those who made big donations to his campaign. For Linda McMahon's \$7 million to pro-Trump Super PACs, she gets to head the Small Business Administration. As a highly controversial professional wrestling CEO, she worked to monopolize the professional wrestling market and stifle competition.

For the Department of Education, school children and their teachers will face Betsy DeVos. From a billionaire family, she is a ferocious advocate of using taxpayer money in the form of vouchers for private schools. She makes no bones about her hatred of public schools and her desire to have commercial managers of school systems.

To lead the Justice Department, Trump has selected Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL), who is big on police surveillance, weak on civil rights enforcement, a hard-liner on immigration and very mixed on corporate crime.

Add these strong-willed ideologues, coupled with Trump's easily bruised ego, Twitter-tantrums on trivial matters and his penchant to always be the decision-making strongman, and you've got the making of an explosive regime with daily eruptions.

Whatever the media makes of the inevitable intrigue, in-fighting and likely resistance by the civil service to adhere to their lawful missions, it is the people who will be paying the price. President Trump will use the media to sugarcoat, falsify, distract, intimidate, glorify and massify the millions of people who believed, once upon a recent time, that he would "Make America Great Again."

As the profiteers of Wall Street and the war hawks blend with the corporate statist, the super-confident Trump is telling us what their products will be like and that he'll be their salesman.

If you think all this sounds predictable, there are going to be more than a few "black swans" (to use Nassim Taleb's best-selling book title) coming over the horizon. It is time to mobilize as citizens in the Paul Revere mode.